

HELLO AGAIN

VOL 17 NO. 4

JUL-AUG 1986

A PERSONAL NOTE: Sorry for the delay. I had to wait for the flyer to be printed. I got the information to Bob Burchett a little later than usual...Supplement #4 for the Jack Benny log is now available for a SASE. Also by convention time my first supplement to my Circulating Show Log will be available. Original logs are still available for \$17.50 and must be purchased for the supplement to make any sense.

CONVENTION '86: Also tentatively coming to the convention are Sybil Trent, Evie Juster, Jackson Beck...Also coming is Louise Erickson, another original cast member of the Great Gildersleeve, and Gil Mack (Chick Carter, Dick Tracy). We are also having a re-creation of The Hitchhiker as a part of the Suspense workshop on Friday. Lucille Fletcher and William N Robson are again invited.

CONVENTION '85: Contact Bob Burnham if you want audio tapes of convention. Send \$12 or 6 1800' tapes; 3 will be returned. To receive it on cassettes, send \$20 for 11 cassettes. (BB, Box 39522, Redford, MI 48239)

RADIO IS ALIVE AND WELL: On July 27th, Charles Michelson launched a syndicated radio series of Sherlock Holmes with Gielgud and Richardson and Gangbusters. They will be aired weekly. This new satellite service is called the Mind's Eye. Check your local paper. WMCA in NYC will broadcast the shows on Mondays from 9-10 pm...WMAQ-AM in NYC is airing 10 different syndicated series Mon-Fri 8-9 pm...On July 27, Meet the Press was aired on NBC for the last time. It was first aired in 1945.

PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED: THE AUTOGRAPH COLLECTOR'S MAGAZINE (Joe Kraus), Box 55328, Stockton, CA 95205; (209) 473-0570. It is \$12 a year for six issues. If you collect autographs this is the magazine for you... MILWAUKEE CLUB NEWSLETTER, June, article on Bob Shannon...SPERDVAC RADIOGRAM, June, articles on Lurene Tuttle and Lux Radio Theater...July, articles on Rudy Vallee, Richard Wilson, computers and OTR...NARA NEWS, Winter 1985, many articles...ILLUSTRATED PRESS, Jul, article on CBS Radio Mystery Theater...NOSTALGIA DIGEST, Aug-Sep, 1946 article on Marion and Jim Jordan.

BOOKS and MAGAZINES: KOVELS' ADVERTISING COLLECTIBLES PRICE LIST by Ralph and Terry Kovel, Crown Pub, 1986, \$11.95. 176 pages of over 6000 prices for advertising signs, premium giveaways, trade cards, stickers and much more. Also contains hundreds of trademarks, logos, and histories of manufacturers.

A NEW PUBLICATION: I still welcome any updates on my log of circulating shows. The log is still available, as mentioned above, for \$17.50. I appreciate the mention of the log by SPERDVAC.

LOGS: From RAY STANICH, 173 Columbia Hts, Brooklyn, NY 11201. Complete logs of Hollywood Sound Stage and Stars in the Air; both for a SASE.

NEW SHOWS AND CATALOGS: DAVE SIEGEL, Box 610, Croton-on-Hudson, NY 10520 has updated listings of shows he has beginning with C, I and Jack including Jack Pearl, 5 new Inner Sanctum and Claudia.

{ } If box is checked, \$10 is due for another year

NEW ADDRESSES: STEVE SCOTT, 19341 Hottinger Cir., Germantown, MD 20874...DONALD MOORE, 7320 Bristlecone Ct, Ft. Worth, TX 76137...CAROL FISHBURN, 4526 Alveo Rd, La Canada, CA 91011

NEW FRIENDS AND RETURNEES: FLOYD BLOUNT, 10941 Beauty Ln, Dallas, TX 75229...LINDA WACHTER, 3451 Montrose Ave, LaCrescenta, CA 91214...DAN SINGER, BMI, 320 W 57th St, NYC, NY 10019...JEFFREY LeBRUN, 25 West Pierson Ave, Somers Point, NJ 08244...DAVE SWIFT, 38 Dartmouth St, Halifax, MA 02338...DOUGLAS DUE, 2510 Jonathan Rd, Ellicott City, MD 21043 (Many thanks for the good words about my publication). Doug is looking for more Jack Armstrong material...GLENDA KELLY, 2323 Ralston Ln, Redondo Beach, CA 90278...JAMES YEARY, 12922 Harbor Blvd Suite 800, Garden Grove, CA 92640...FRED BANTIN, 743 43rd Ave, Greeley, CO 80634...DICK BORKOWSKI, 12 Narbrook Pk, Narberth, PA 19072...HAROLD ROBLES, Box 1, Glastonbury, Ct 06033 is president of the Albert Schweitzer Reverence for life Memorial Foundation Inc. and is looking for any radio material regarding Schweitzer...JAMES HANNERS, 10306 Preston Hwy, Louisville, Ky 40229...MALACHI TOPPING, 1010 East Wooster St, Bowling Green, OH 43402 is doing a content analysis of the March of Time and would like all the shows he can get...ERIC ARTHUR, 105 Pasbehegh Dr, Williamsburg, VA 23185. Eric wrote for OTR and writes articles today...WALT GOLLENDER, 12 Marshall St Suite 8-Q, Irvington, NJ 07111, leading FOUR ACES archivist since 1952, needs several tv and movie clips of them. If you can help, please contact him.

OLD FRIENDS: JOHN BARBER, 1807 1/2 Burgundy St, New Orleans, LA 70116 has many out of print OTR books xeroxed. Send him a SASE for listing of books and cost...Tom Heathwood, Box 16, Chestnut Hill, MA 02167 still wants LIGHT'S OUT episodes of Chicken Heart and Inside Out. Also VHS or audio track of a Jack Benny tv show in which Jack did his version of Gilbert & Sullivan's "Mikado."

GRAHAM McNAMEE: Early performers at NBC had to be highly adaptable. Before he gained "star" status, Graham McNamee, for example, went through his paces as a singer, then an announcer, a news reporter and a sportscaster. He even became a comedy straightman - most notably for Ed Wynn. His resources did not end there. McNamee conducted long broadcasts from the old WEAf studios at 195 Broadway on hot summer days with an electric fan wafting a breeze at him across a huge block of ice. (Variety, June 4, 1986)

IN FOND MEMORY: ROLAND (RUSTY) MORRIS, May 14, 63; tv, film, radio actor (Dramas for Youth, Mayor of the Town, others)...LURENE TUTTLE, May 28, 79; known as the first lady of Hollywood radio. Her favorite role was Effie opposite Howard Duff in Adv. of Sam Spade...DON MacLAUGHLIN, May 28, 79; The highlight of our convention in 1978 was Don MacLaughlin and Mandel Kramer re-creating their roles in Counterspy...BENNY GOODMAN, Jun 13, 77; on radio from 1934. 25 shows are available from his Camel Caravan-Swing School (1936-39); 3 from Let's Dance (1934-35)...WHITEY FORD (Duke of Paducah), June 20, 85; Grand Ole Opry humorist...KATE SMITH, June 17, 79; dominating radio personality. Dick Hayes, a fellow collector, is an expert on Kate Smith and has just about all radio material available...ROBERT PRESNELL Jr, June 14, 71; film, tv, radio writer, director, producer (ILAM, Orson Welles shows)...RUDY VALLEE, July 3, 84; 73 shows available from The Fleischmann Hour in the 30's to his 1946-47 show sponsored by Philip Morris...JOHN

SEYMOUR, Jul 10, 88; legit and radio actor. He was the 6th generation of an acting family. His wife, Abby Lewis, has attended our conventions.

FLORENCE HALOP, Jul 15, 63; tv and radio actress (Duffy's Tavern, Bobby Benson)...LUCILLE WALL, Jul 11, 87; tv and radio actress (Portia faces Life, Lorenzo Jones)...BENNY RUBIN, Jul 15, 87; a regular on the Jack Benny Show.. HELEN CRAIG, Jul 20, 74; film, tv and radio actress...ABRAHAM (JOHNNY) MIRKIN, Jul 28, 68; char. actor; was "Little Johnny" who "called for Philip Morris" on radio from 1935-40...WILLIAM B WILLIAMS, Aug 3, 62; New York City radio personality, with WNEW for 40 years and host of the Make Believe Ballroom for over 30 years

*

*

*

JOHN A. BARBER, BOX 70711, NEW ORLEANS, LA. 70172

Here's NEW DIMENSIONS in your old time radio hobby. Scripts, comedy sketches, comic book stories based on OTR programs, much more!!

#5 -THE GOON SHOW-The Dreaded Batter Pudding Hurler-15 pages-\$2.25

#8-KINGS IN JUDAEA-Dorothy Sayers-10 pages-\$1.50-#20-THE DEVIL'S

SAINT-John Dickson Carr-9 pages-\$1.35-#23-THE SHADOW-The Tunnel Of Terror-8 pages-\$1.20-#28-JACK PEARL- bio.w/ Baron Munchausen's

Circus-10 pages-\$1.50-#32-MARX BROS.-bio. w/ Hollywood agents-10

pages-\$1.50-#50-THEATRE GUILD ON THE AIR-Dead End-19 pages-\$2.85-

#78-Sherlock Holmes and The Stockbroker's Clerk-11 pages- \$1.65-

THE ARTHUR GODFREY NOBODY KNOWS by Joan Curtis-34 pages- \$5.00-

plus comix- FLASH GORDON-Return To Mongo-22 pages-\$3.30.-JUNGLE

JIM-The Land Of No Return-14 pages-\$2.10-TARZAN at The Earth's Core

-21 pages-\$3.15-plus books!:-GUNSMOKE by Robert Turner-1958-\$22.00

-CAN YOU TOP THIS? by Ford, Hershfield & Laurie, Jr.-\$18.00- plus magazines-RADIO MIRROR- Feb. 1948-\$17.00-Radio Mirror-Oct. 1949-

\$17.00 plus radio scripts and scenarios by W.C. Fields-36 pages-

\$3.60 And there's more!:- All prices postpaid.-For the entire

mishmash, send a SASE with TWO 22¢ stamps.

Give a NEW DIMENSION to your old time radio hobby!! Write me

today. (There's more space. Jay?) Oh. There's a two dollar minimum.

-Then there's HENRY MORGAN'S JOKE BOOK-1955- a complete xeroxing for seven bucks. And then, there's stuff I haven't even cataloged.

JOHN A. BARBER, BOX 70711, NEW ORLEANS, LA. 70172. Love and grits.

JAY HICKERSON, Box C, Orange, CT 06477 (203) 248-2887; 795-6261 \$10/year

Black Tie For Fibber McGee?

**NBC Radio Execs, With Net Since 1940s,
Look Back In Wonder At Age Of Elegance**

Early radio was an elegant age. "In those days everyone dressed up to come and see our radio shows. You walked past the lines at 30 Rock and you felt the air of excitement. It was showtime every night."

That's how Steve White and Bob Wogan, oldtimers who've been with NBC Radio since the '40s, describe what it was like working with the likes of Fred Allen and Portland Hoffa, Sammy Kaye and Milton Berle or on shows like "Fibber McGee," "Duffy's Tavern," "The Colgate Comedy Hour," and "Phil Spitalny And His All-Girl Orchestra."

The two came up through the ranks, both having joined the net as pages in 1943. While involved in the production division, Wogan developed such programs as "Recollections," "The Stan Kenton Concerts" and "X Minus One." White's credits include "The Kate Smith Show," as producer, and program manager of flagship station WNBC in NYC. Wogan is currently regional director of affiliate relations; White is director of affiliate services.

The tuxedos and silk dresses of audience and performers went along with the fact that everything on radio back then was done live. In fact, NBC, they say, was the last network to go over to wired and later taped recordings.

"We prided ourselves on live performances with staff musicians, in most cases, doing two performances each day of a show," recall White and Wogan.

Camaraderie was common. Wogan, White and other staffers hobnobbed and joked with performers, everyone from Nelson Eddy to Edgar Bergen. Fred Allen in particular they remember as a "lovely man."

Tempted By Television

By the early '50s, however, many performers were moving over to what they called "visual broadcasting." As in the changeover from silent films to movies with sound, some made it and some didn't. Fred

Allen didn't translate well; Jackie Gleason made it much bigger on the small screen than he ever had on radio.

The last live radio show Wogan worked on was the two-hour Sunday night "Big Show," featuring Tallulah Bankhead, Meredith Wilson, Peggy Lee and others. "It was, it turned out, a sort of 'last hurrah' for radio broadcasting of an earlier, more florid period," explained White.

After that wall-to-wall music set in.

Not that Wogan, White and their like are simply nostalgic. Their colleague, engineer Raphael Weiss, with the network for 30 years, shares their continuing enthusiasm. He showed *Variety* around the newly equipped \$7,000,000 studios at 1700 Broadway.

His own office bespeaks his attitude to radio: he keeps an oldtimey, heavy mike displayed on a cabinet, but he recently sold off his last Scully disk lathe which cut those old transcription recordings.

Some Tradeoffs

While Weiss admits he misses live programs, he's proud of the people who put together The Source, a sort of mini-net program package. Nor will he be sorry when digital recording comes in and replaces audio-tape. "We change with the times — and there's not enough time to look back," he says.

There have been, all three insist, other high spots for radio. News and information, for example, became extremely important to listeners in the '50s. And for once radio had the advantage over television of being able to flash news instantaneously. News on the hour changed the rhythm of radio broadcasting by the early '60s.

"We also came up with innovative programming concepts like 'Monitor' in the mid '50s," White added. "Monitor" was a 40-hour marathon weekend show which offered a sort of "window on the world" for listeners. It consisted of

(Continued on page 78)

Black Tie

(Continued from page 54)

news and sports, entertainment interviews, live band remotes, etc.

People like Gene Rayburn, Al Capp, Henry Morgan, Groucho Marx, all loved to do bits on "Monitor," remembers Wogan. For 20 years it effectively held its own, against television, independent radio, and changes in taste.

Changes Needed

Toward the end of the '70s, Wogan explains, it became clear that a younger, more contemporary, more upbeat style had to be adopted at NBC. Demographic studies showed there were different audiences out there to be courted and many listeners had switched to FM music stations.

In response to these changes, NBC developed three differentiated mini-nets: the Source, Talknet and Radio Entertainment.

With this new challenge, there are, White and Wogan insist, always fresh problems to solve and too little time to get bored.

Moreover, they've been around long enough to know that things often come back, in new guises, with new audiences in mind. They like that.

Even drama serials, they surmise, may make it back on the air someday — if they manage to address their audience in the style and language of the present.

Variety

June 4, 1986